

Amendments to the Claims

1-61. (canceled)

62. (currently amended) A method of stabilizing tissue comprising the steps of:
positioning a solid ~~an~~ implant entirely within ~~in~~ a patient's body at a host ~~an implantation~~
site; and
expanding the implant by absorbing liquid into the implant while the implant is at the host
~~implantation~~ site.

63-68. (canceled)

69. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 62 wherein the implant is at least partially formed of a biodegradable material.

70-75. (canceled)

76. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 62 further including the step of forming at least a portion of a spacer of expandable material, said step of positioning an implant in a patient's body includes positioning the spacer in the patient's body, said step of expanding the implant includes expanding expandable material of the spacer.

77-115.(canceled)

116. (currently amended) A method as set forth in claim 62 wherein the host ~~implantation~~ site is at least partially delimited by tissue.

117. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 116 wherein the step of expanding the implant includes expanding the implant such that a distance between the tissue and implant is decreased.

118. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 116 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant into the tissue.

119. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 116 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant to lock the implant to the tissue.

120. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 116 wherein the tissue is bone.

121. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 120 wherein the step of expanding the implant includes expanding the implant such that a distance between the bone and implant is decreased.

122. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 120 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant into the bone.

123. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 120 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant to lock the implant to the bone.

124. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 62 further including expanding the implant after compressing the implant.

125. (currently amended) A method of stabilizing tissue comprising the steps of:
compressing a solid ~~an~~ implant;
positioning the implant entirely within ~~in~~ a patient's body at a host ~~an implantation~~ site;
and
expanding the implant at the host ~~implantation~~ site after compressing the implant.

126. (currently amended) A method as set forth in claim 125 wherein the host ~~implantation~~

site is at least partially delimited by tissue.

127. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 126 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant such that a distance between the tissue and the implant is decreased.

128. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 126 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant into the tissue.

129. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 126 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant to lock the implant to the tissue.

130. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 126 wherein the tissue is bone.

131. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 130 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant such that a distance between the bone and implant is decreased.

132. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 130 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant into the bone.

133. (previously presented) A method as set forth in claim 130 wherein expanding the implant includes expanding the implant to lock the implant to the bone.

134. (currently amended) A method as set forth in claim 125 further including expanding the implant by absorbing liquid into the implant while the implant is at the host implantation site.

135. (new) A method of stabilizing tissue comprising the steps of:
positioning an implant in a patient's body at a host site; and
expanding the implant by absorbing liquid into the implant while the implant is at the host

site to thereby create a mechanical interlock between the implant and tissue independent of additional attachment means.

136. (new) A method as set forth in claim 135 wherein the implant is at least partially formed of a biodegradable material.

137. (new) A method as set forth in claim 135 further including the step of forming at least a portion of a spacer of expandable material, said step of positioning an implant in a patient's body includes positioning the spacer in the patient's body, said step of expanding the implant includes expanding expandable material of the spacer.

138. (new) A method as set forth in claim 135 wherein the tissue is bone.

139. (new) A method as set forth in claim 135 further including expanding the implant after compressing the implant.